

Memorandum

To : The Conservancy
The Advisory Committee

Date: February 26, 2007

From :  Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Hon. ASLA, Executive Director

Subject: **Agenda Item 8(e): Consideration of resolution of expressing support for a Reagan Legacy Trail and Wildlife Corridor project between Alamos Canyon and Malibu Creek State Park.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Conservancy adopt the attached resolution expressing support for Reagan Legacy Trail and Wildlife Corridor project between Alamos Canyon and Malibu Creek State Park.

Legislative Authority: Section 33211 (c) of the Public Resource Code.

Background: The inter-mountain range habitat linkage at the western side of the Simi Valley between the Santa Susana Mountains and the Simi Hills is perhaps the most threatened habitat linkage in the Santa Monica Mountains and Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor zone, with the exception of the connection between the 23 Freeway and the Wildwood Canyon Park area. The heart of this natural lands connection is the Tierra Rejada Valley.

The western habitat linkage across the Tierra Rejada Valley is rapidly being degraded by a combination of commercial (golf) and large lot residential development. Although the western connection near the 23 Freeway is critical, the eastern section of the linkage now shows greater promise for a permanent functional wildlife movement corridor into the core habitat of the Simi Hills. One of the fixtures in this eastern connection is the Reagan Presidential Library facility.

A series of events led staff members of the National Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to develop the idea of a joint wildlife corridor and regional trail through this area. The natural starting place for such a trail was the Alamos Canyon/118 Freeway intersection area where animals and trail users would contact the core habitat of the Santa Susana Mountains. Hopefully the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA) can conclude a proposed transaction to acquire a staging area just north of Los Angeles Avenue along Alamos Canyon Creek. Perhaps the greatest addition would be for the TNC to complete a pending multi-hundred-acre acquisition at Alamos Canyon on the north side of the 118 Freeway.

The proposed southern trail terminus could well have been envisioned by the group to end within the Cheeseboro Unit of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation located north of the 101 Freeway. Instead the concept was expanded to envision a trail connection southward into the Santa Monica Mountains to the historic Reagan Ranch located within Malibu Creek State Park. State Parks is well along the way in its plans to develop an equestrian oriented campground on the Reagan Ranch portion of the park. The multi-agency proposal as formulated now envisions a contiguous regional trail and wildlife corridor between the 118 Ronald Reagan Freeway and the Reagan Ranch with the presidential library site along the route.

A kick off meeting was hosted last month by the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (RSRPD). Attendees included representatives from RSRPD, SMMC, MRCA, Conejo Open Space and Conservation Authority, National Park Service, State Parks, Santa Monica Mountains Trails Council, The Nature Conservancy, City of Simi Valley, and the National Park Service's Rivers and Trails Conservation Assistance Program. Also invited were representatives from the Reagan Presidential Library and the Calleguas Municipal Water District. Prior to this meeting, TNC representatives had had extensive discussions of the idea with representatives from the library. The group came up with the name Reagan Legacy Trail and Wildlife Corridor. Future meetings are planned and the group agreed that as many agencies as possible should adopt resolutions or positions that recognize and support the project. The MRCA adopted a support resolution on February 7th, 2007. Three invitations to the next meeting will also be extended to Ventura County, Los Angeles County, and the City of Agoura Hills.

A conceptual map of the trail and wildlife corridor alignment is attached. Much of the land is already public. One of the tasks of the group is to pursue the acquisition of fee simple or easement rights over approximately seven private parcels.